



Stars in a Mud Puddle

Explanation of the Picture

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The Mud Puddle

This world, and age, is a mud puddle. While there are many stunning scenes and wonders to behold, it is still a mud puddle. The sun *sets* on beautiful scenes. Captivating, inspiring songs *have a*

final note. “Perfect days” end. And all too often, swirls of mud are not far behind. *Natural evil* abounds, and each living thing eventually succumbs to this environment - one way or another. We are from the mud and return to the mud (that has a bit of a familiar ring). But things get worse. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned His listeners, “*Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine*” (Mt 7:6). When discussing false prophets and teachers, Peter concluded, “*A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire*” (2Pet 2:22). God compares people to pigs (an unclean animal, Lv 11:7 and Dt 14:8). And pigs wallow in - more than dirt. There is a *pigpen* in the mud puddle. *Moral evils* add filth to the mud puddle and geometrically compound what is already a muddy scene. And no one is untouched by this filth because it is not just *outside* of us, but also *inside* (Mk 7:20-23). Before becoming a Christian, everything we did contributed to the dung in the puddle. This is really a bad scene.

Fortunately, God has created another option. When we come to God - in His prescribed manner - He washes us completely, and transfers us “*to the Kingdom of His beloved Son*” (Col 1:13). And instead of being pigs, *one* title now bestowed upon us is, “*saints*” or “*holy ones*” (Col 1:1, Phil 1:1, Eph 1:1, Ro 1:7, 1Cor 1:2, etc.). The primary meaning of this word is “*set apart*,” and in these context it means - set apart from pigs. Of course, there is little room for arrogance about this new designation because, when thinking right, the saint fully understands he/she was once ... a pig. In fact, there is *no room* for arrogance.

Saints in the Mud Puddle

After initial conversion, God leaves the saint in the mud puddle, but the pigpen is another matter. There are several interesting things about this situation.

First. It is possible to live in the mud puddle - without living in the pigpen. The saint is instructed to touch nothing unclean (2Cor 6:17,18). While *natural evils* continue to swirl around the saint, the saint can refuse to participate in the *moral evils*. The saint might not be able to escape the onslaught of fires, floods, tornadoes, accidents, or diseases (etc., etc., etc.), but the pigpen *can be* avoided. It has a fence around it (for examples of fence posts, see Mk 7:20-23, 1Cor 6:9,10, Gal 5:19-21, and Rev 21:8).

Second. The saint is to be *a luminary* in the mud puddle. “*Do all things without grumbling or disputing; in order that you prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights, luminaries, stars in the world ...*” (Phil 2:14,15). The saint *represents God* - His way, will and priorities. We work to bring others *out* of the pigpen. We’ve been in it - and out of it. The grass *really is greener* on our side of the fence. Actually, the pigpen doesn’t even have any green grass.

Third. God determines how long the saint is to be left in the mud puddle. The murdering thief crucified next to Jesus, was not long for this world. After his deathbed conversion, Jesus said, “... *today you will be with Me in Paradise*” (Lk 23:43). But other saints are kept in the mud puddle for a long time. As of this “final” edit, I am 42+ years post conversion. “*In Thy Book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them*” (Ps 139:16). “*My times are in Thy hand*” (Ps 31:15).

Fourth. Charles Spurgeon, a preacher in the 19th Century, made a comment to this effect. ‘*The stars, which are in heaven, can sometimes be seen by a strange reflection in a mud puddle by the road, in a vile condition. Yet still they are shining - because heaven is their location!*’ That comment sparked this drawing, the song that goes with it, and the material you are now reading. You see, whatever station we occupy on earth, or whatever the situation in which we find ourselves, “*our citizenship is in heaven*” - not this mud puddle. We have every right to be here, as our Creator is the Ruler of all the

earth, but we know the kingdoms, and rulers, of this age are passing away (1Cor 2:6). While we “honor all men ... (and) honor the king” and “render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due, custom to whom custom ... ” (1Pet 2:17 and Ro 13:7), we still know we are “aliens and strangers” in this mud puddle (1Pet 2:11). Our real home, and ultimate allegiance, is the coming, eternal, Kingdom.

Fifth. While it is true the mud puddle rejects us, that is a reactive punch. You see, we rejected the world *first*. Jesus stated, “*I am the light of the world*” (Jn 8:12). When we call on Him, and He enters our life, the light, *His light*, takes up residence in us. We are “born again” and made “*a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come*” (Jn 3:3 and 2Cor 5:17). “*They (old buddies) are surprised you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you*” (1Pet 4:4). That is reactive. And why such a reaction? “*The light is come into the world, and men loved (agapao)the darkness rather than the light as their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed*” (Jn 3:19,20).

“World, don’t bother rejecting me - Cause I’ve already **rejected you**.
As God opens my eyes, to each and every one of your lies,
I keep finding myself saying’ - to you - ‘World, ... we’re through!
I want nothing more to do with you’”

Chorus to my song, “*The World*”
[Here's that song :\)](#)

Unfortunately

Sometimes saints “revisit” the pigpen. Sometimes they just stick in a toe - but sometimes, that turns into a headlong dive. This gives rise to charges of, “Hypocrite!” by some of the pigs in the mire. Others don’t *say it* - they just *think it*. They are just happy to have the saint back in the pen. It is good to get back into the normal way of life in the dung.

It is hard to say why saints do this. Sometimes, they just get too close ... thinking they can keep their footing. In an overestimation of their prowess, they suddenly slip in. There truly is “a slippery slope” around the pig pen. Maybe at other times, some saints just don’t like the way things are going outside of the pen. So, they decide to go back in - where life appears easier. But, ... it isn’t. Maybe some saints feel they are “missing something” - you know, something fun or something. But, ... they aren’t. Saints never prosper when they participate in the activities of the pigpen.

Fortunately

God will not allow His children, whom He has previously washed, to stay in that dung. These extractions are accompanied with varying degrees of pain (Heb 12:5-13), but it is a display of His phenomenal patience, *and faithfulness*, that the saint is not abandoned to the pigpen or the mud puddle - or the fate of those environments (2Pet 3:9, 1Pet 4:17,18, 2Tim 2:13 and 1Jn 2:15-17). Incidentally, there are “saints” who stay in the pigpen and are never extracted. That is because they profess to be saints - but really aren’t (Mt 13:5,20,21 and 24-30)

Goals for One’s Stay in the Mud Puddle

God leaves His children in this mud puddle for a multitude of reasons. But rather than getting into them here, I want to approach this from a little different angle.

I think the saint would be well served by setting some goals for his/her time in this puddle. The ones I will submit here are *very broad*, and can be applied to a variety of endeavors. While I do not

always do this myself, you could say *this is my first goal* - to think in the terms below.

A Couple of My Goals. There are all kinds of materials in this mud puddle - vying for your attention. You only have a limited amount of time for reading, or music, or for listening to another.

Goal One: *I want your attention* on what I am putting forward - and,
Goal Two: I want my work to shine like *stars* in this mud puddle.

To meet this second goal, I must draw material from afar because "*I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh*" (Ro 7:18). My flesh just spews waste into this mud puddle. Who needs more of that? I have never understood how, or why, a genuine Christian would deliberately produce secular writing, music or speaking in areas that involve moral valuations. Enough garbage comes out of us anyway without deliberately working to produce it. "*He who does not gather with Me - scatters*" (Lk 11:23).

Another Goal. When I leave this world, a star leaves the mud puddle (we are indeed the real stars of this age. Maybe that's why He says in Psalm 116:15, "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.*" He sees the completion of *His work* in extracting "*the precious from the worthless*" [Jer 15:19]). At my exit, muddy water will seek to move in and fill the void left behind. And the fewer the stars - the dirtier, darker, and nastier the mud puddle. Therefore, it seems crucial to me that I fervently ask God to use me to strengthen existing stars, and, if He would so honor me, give birth to new ones. I want to leave *residual light* behind.

Matthew left some residue behind. We know it as the first gospel of the New Testament. Mark and Luke and John left some residue behind as well. So also Paul, Peter, James, and Jude. My hope is that my labors and influences on lives will impact the constitution of the mud puddle **now, but also become residual light after I have left the scene.** I hope my efforts "*have been wrought in God*" (Jn 3:21). Jesus said, "*Every good tree bears good fruit A good tree cannot produce bad fruit*" (Mt 7:17,18). As I seek Him, this gives confidence to my hope.

And here is one of the most amazing of truths. Any residue of light *left behind* is more valuable than all the world's "wisdom" and "knowledge." That residue has more lasting power than the greatest achievement of man wrought outside of Christ. For example, the residue left by a dying, converted thief (his deathbed profession in Luke 23:39-43), will be proved to have accomplished *an infinite amount more* than all the reigns of all godless despots - *added together!* That is how overwhelmingly powerful God's light is. Judgment Day will confirm this assertion. Let's see what stands in that Day.

Under the Night Sky

As you can see in this drawing, it is night. But the night sky is destined to disappear. And there will also be no need for the sun - as the glory of God will illumine the coming order (Rev 21:22-24 and 22:5).

As we navigate under this night sky, we need assistance from on high. We need lampposts to show us The Way. The Bible is filled with them. Sometimes, as we reach forks in the road, we need to hear, "*This is the way. Walk in it*" (Isa 30:21). God helps us acquire an ear to hear His voice as opposed to the voice of strangers (Jn 10:3-5 and 18:37). But there are times, under this night sky, that all does seem black. We may not see any light at all. But if we move out of the swirling waters of this puddle, and find a little eddy and look up, we will see at least a pinprick of light from a distant star. When God pierces the darkness, even a pinprick streaming down to us from His eternal Throne can fill us to

overflowing - and empower us to persevere. The world does not understand this. Many times it even appears to them as foolishness (1Cor 1:23).

The Mud Puddle and Pigpens 's Fate.

The mud puddle, and the pigpen are going to be dried up - and never refilled or repopulated. They are "passing away." The new earth will be a place "in which righteousness dwells" (2Pet 3:13). "*For all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts Children, it is the last hour*" (1Jn 2:16-18). When the pigpen is dried up, the pigs will look around - in vain - for another pigpen. I believe they will immediately know, "*There is no other pigpen - and there never will be another!*" This will cause sheer terror. As they seek to flee from the Hand of their Owner, they will immediately realize ... there is no place to go in the new order - no domain in which they can ply their trade(s). And, to compound their plight, they will know this new order is totally dominated by the things of the living, holy God. They *could never* be comfortable there ... and *would never* opt for it anyway. It would be miserable for them there.

The Owner will then place them - in another pen.

* * * * *

This world's not my home,
Though here, I'm not alone.
He has me fishing for men
In The Dead Sea of sin.

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